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The SHELTON STATEment

Elaine Chao, U.S. Secretary of Labor, Visits Shelton State

"The robotic and electronics lab is among the most impressive that I've seen and I've seen a lot of very impressive institutions."



The following is excerpted from Sec. Chao's remarks at Shelton State Community College on May 5, 2005.

"The highlight of today has been this wonderful tour of Shelton State Community College's electronics and robotics lab. It has been so inspiring to meet with the faculty and students.

The robotic and electronics lab is among the most impres-

sive that I've seen and I've seen a lot of very impressive institutions. I've traveled throughout the country and this visit to this institution of learning and training and also the electronics and robotics lab with the students and dedicated faculty are truly impressive. This lab is a great example of what's happening in community colleges all around the country. They're taking a look at the new jobs being created in their community and designing programs to help workers access these opportunities.

And community colleges, because they belong to the communities, know better than anyone else what skill sets are required of the community and skill sets the employers need and are necessary.

When we talked to employers nationwide, the employers told us that they can't find enough workers with the skills needed for the high paying jobs being created. So what our nation is facing is a skill gap. We have workers looking for work; we have employers looking for workers and good paying jobs are being created in industries. The skills gap is a real challenge that our nation must face if we want to remain a global leader.

That's why new training programs such as the one we saw today are so important. For today's young people, a high school education is only the beginning. Most of the new jobs being created require some kind of post-secondary education. It doesn't have to be a 4-year degree; it can be advanced training conducted by an employer or certificate programs like the ones offered by this college. But in today's rapidly changing economy, it is critical for workers to get advanced training and to continually update their skills.

We have workers that are eager to get new training or

retrained. Community Colleges are a critical component of filling that need. Community colleges are agile, are flexible, are part of the community and they know what skill sets are needed.

You know, it used to be training programs took a long time. You'd have to go through two years. If you are a nontraditional student, and you've got children or family obligations, it's very hard to devote two years to training. Also, the work place changes too quickly. Two years is too long a period in time to train a worker.

Our workforce is changing so rapidly and Shelton State Community College's focus on shortening the time of these programs but not compromising the integrity and quality of the program is very, very important. It supports partnerships between community and technical colleges like this one, employers in rapidly growing industries and local workforce investment boards. The goal is to ensure that the education and training community develops the curriculum necessary to teach the skills identified by employers in their communities.

Thank you for inviting me here today. To the students in the audience, we are very, very proud of you and I'm so impressed by what I saw in the labs today. To the faculty, thank you so much for your patience and the love for your students. To the Work Force Development people for what you do every single day. To the officials and the rest of the community, thank you for being here and your collaborative efforts and your concern.



Alabama College System Chancellor, Roy Johnson, explains the need for highly skilled workers to Senator Jeff Sessions, Secretary Elaine Chao, State Board of Education presiding officer, Sandra Ray, Shelton State President Rick Rogers and Industrial Electronics Instructor, Brett Butler.

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About the West Alabama Center for Workforce Development

The West Alabama Center for Workforce Development was created in coordination with the Chamber of Commerce and under the guidance of an Advisory Board consisting of industry and workforce development community leaders to expand workforce development resources for West Alabama. This initiative was in response to an emergent need of a larger trained workforce due to regional industry growth and development.

The West Alabama Center for Workforce Development's purpose is to provide quality employment and training services for employers and job seekers at all levels. The Center provides a single access point for job seekers and employers and functions as a clearinghouse for workforce development information. This insures a coordinated effort between Shelton State Community College, business and industry and all related workforce programs and offers job seekers a connection to local industry and their job training needs.

WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Pre-Employment Training

Focused Industry Training (FIT) provides basic skills to entry level workers through targeted instruction including training in Computer Literacy, Applied Math, Reading for Information, Essential Workplace Skills, and other skills as identified by local business and industry as necessary for entry level jobs in their companies. The result is an "Alabama Certified Worker" credential. The center provides FIT training in 10 sites including Tuscaloosa and 8 surrounding counties.

Training for Business and Industry

The Training for Business and Industry Center (TBI) offers a wide variety of services to West Alabama Employers. Focusing on developing community and corporate partnerships, the Center works closely with local business leaders

to provide professional instruction that upgrades the skills needed in today's workplace.

The department offers certified training in computer courses, Microsoft applications, industrial maintenance technology, customer service, leadership and supervision, and quality training. Training for Business and Industry also offers organizational development consultation, and development of customized training courses for specific business needs.

Continuing Education/Skills Training

Continuing Education/Skills Training offers a wide variety of courses at affordable prices and convenient times. Skills Training classes are all job specific and job preparatory with most courses lasting three months or less. Certificates are received at the completion of courses. Many of the classes do not require a high school diploma or a G.E.D. to participate. Shelton State Community College takes the lead when it comes to providing certificate programs and customized training that anticipate, and meet, the changing needs of business and industry.

WorkKeys

Developed by American College Testing, Inc., WorkKeys is a tool for improving hiring decisions, reducing turnover, and improving employee satisfaction and productivity by helping companies and individuals identify and learn skills needed to fill specific jobs. The eight WorkKeys skills are: Reading for Information, Applied Mathematics, Listening, Writing, Teamwork, Applied Technology, Locating Information, and Observation. These eight skills can be benchmarked with ACT WorkKeys assessments.

With the results from these assessments the Job Profiler can determine the employees' or potential employees' skill levels and where he/she needs to improve. With this information, the College prepares a customized training program for those specific skills

Benchmark Measures	August 2002- July 2003	August 2002- July 2003	Projected August 2004 July 2005
No. Enrolled in pre-employment training	0	247	387
No. Enrolled in short-term technical classes	2426	3998	4197
No. Enrolled in long-term technical classes	1,624	1,626	1,700
Total Number Enrolled in Training classes	4,050	5,624	5,897
Budget: Center for Workforce Development Initiatives	\$0	\$1,505,561.00	\$527,343.00
No. of Workforce Development Staff	0	14	17
Number of Workkeys Work Skills assessments administered	212	794	833
No. of Remote Skill Training Sites	0	10	13

As labor secretary visits, Riley touts worker training

Riley says Alabama training program, development office lead the nation

Article by Lydia Seabol

Reprinted by courtesy of *The Tuscaloosa News*



Adrienne Williams and Cameron Griffin, two recent graduates of the Focused Industry Training Program, tell Secretary Chao how the program has affected their life as Director of Advancement, Lew Drummond, looks on.

U.S. Secretary of Labor Elaine Chao's face lit up as a giant metal milling machine rumbled to a start at Shelton State Community College on Thursday.

"You've done all this work?" Chao asked a student who was manning the machine.

Chao, along with U.S. Sen. Jeff Sessions, toured Shelton's Workforce Center and later joined Gov. Bob Riley at a ribbon-cutting ceremony at the Tuscaloosa Area Career Center.

The visit to Tuscaloosa was to highlight the importance of worker-training programs.

Alabama is beginning to have a reputation as being a leader in workforce training. The Alabama Industrial Development Training program is ranked No. 1 in the country, Riley said. The state's development office also is the top-ranked state economic development agency in the nation.

"We aren't 48th or 49th; we are the best," Riley said.

Shelton graduate and single mother Adrienne Williams said that before she attended Shelton's Focused Industry Training program, she was supporting herself on \$8- or \$9-an-hour jobs. After her graduation in September, however, she received five job offers, and she was able to almost double her income. She now works at PhiFer Wire Products in Tuscaloosa.

"I did it for my children, not for me," Williams said. "But I'm glad I did it and would recommend it to anyone."

Williams said she was proud that Chao was coming to Shelton and said she was probably the most important political person she had ever had an opportunity to meet.

Chao said job training is important because if Alabama can demonstrate it has a better and highly trained workforce, it will be able to attract better and higher-paying industries.

"Community colleges do a great job to meet employer's [work-force] demands," Chao said. "Community colleges turn out the skill sets necessary."

Chao said that there were millions of jobs created last year, but that there is a skills gap because of a lack of trained employees.

Many industries depend on skilled workers trained in programs such as Shelton's. Ron Aramini, CEO and president of Birmingham-based Pemco Aviation Group, said that there is a dependence on the training programs at community colleges to fill the workforce demand.

"There are a lot of people retiring," Aramini said. "We need skilled people to replace the retirees and support the growth."

Since 2001, Alabama has received about \$660 million for employment services. The Tuscaloosa Area Career Center offers job services that were consolidated under one roof last year to make it easier on its users.

"Centers like this not only offer us an economic development model that is becoming the model for the rest of the country, but is also changes people's lives, and that's ultimately what it's all about," Riley said.

Riley also said last year, the state assisted more than 1 million people when they lost or needed a new job through career centers like the one in Tuscaloosa.

"Community Colleges do a great job to meet employer's workforce demand."
Chao



Senator Sessions, Secretary Chao and Ms. Ray watch as Machine Tool technology Instructor, Jason Moore, describes how Chase Oldham is turning a workpiece on a lathe.

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WHAT IS CAREER AND TECHNICAL EDUCATION?

Career and technical education prepares both youth and adults for a wide range of careers. These careers may require varying levels of education - from high school and postsecondary certificates to two- and four-year college degrees. Career and technical education is offered in middle school, high schools, two-year community and technical colleges and other postsecondary schools.

According to U.S. Department of Education Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), most high school students take at least one career and technical education course, and one in four students take three or more courses in a single program area. One-third of college students are involved in career and technical programs, and as many as 40 million adults engage in short-term postsecondary occupational training.

Nearly one-third of the fastest growing occupations will require an associate's degree or a postsecondary vocational certificate, according to a 2004 U.S. Department of Labor Bureau of Labor Statistics report.

Nearly 75 percent of employers report severe conditions when trying to hire qualified workers, 40 percent say that applicants are poorly skilled and 30 percent say that applicants have the wrong skills for available jobs, according

to a 2002 survey by the U.S. Chamber of Commerce Center to Workforce Preparation. Career and technical education plays a vital role in helping American business close this gap by building a competitive workforce for the 21st Century.

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Eighty percent of new jobs available over the next decade will require a minimum of two-years of postsecondary education. Eighty-five percent of all jobs will require skilled workers or professionals. Eighty-five percent of the people working today will still be in the labor force in the next decade, requiring continuous high level training to maintain an adequate workforce. By 2010, Alabama will have over 300,000 jobs available only to those who have the appropriate level of training.

Shelton State Community College and The Alabama College System is determined to provide that training.

In Alabama, two-year colleges through physical proximity, through outreach and through new modes of electronic delivery can meet the needs of the state for workforce training with comprehensive assessment, evaluation, job market analysis, pre-vocational training, skills training, pre-employment training, specialized and customized training. Alabama's two-year colleges specialize in providing a vast array of programs and services to adult students seeking jobs and training leading to improved employment opportunities